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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/51/604/Add.6)]

51/178. First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/183 of 21 December 1993, 49/110 of 19 December 1994 and 50/107 of 20 December 1995 related to the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and all other relevant resolutions relating to international cooperation for the eradication of poverty in developing countries,

Recognizing that the international community, at the highest political level, has already reached a consensus on and committed itself to the eradication of poverty through declarations and programmes of action of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990, particularly the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women,

Expressing serious concern that more than 1.3 billion people in the world, a majority of whom are women, live in absolute poverty, especially in developing countries, and that the number of such people continues to increase,

Welcoming the formulation of direct programmes of poverty eradication by some developing countries at the national level,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty and proclamation of

the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty[1] and on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,[2]

Recognizing that investment in human capital and domestic and international policies supportive of economic and social development are essential prerequisites for the eradication of poverty,

Noting the activities to eradicate poverty carried out by countries, by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and by organizations, associations, institutions and entities of civil society, within the framework of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, and the coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the results of the major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 in the economic, social and related fields,

Noting also the action to be taken within the framework of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006),

Recalling its resolution 50/161 of 22 December 1995, in which it decided to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development[3] and to consider further actions and initiatives, inter alia, towards the eradication of poverty in the world,

Taking note of the agreed conclusions on coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996,[4] as well as of the outcome of the sessions of relevant functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 1996,

1. Expresses its solidarity with people living in poverty in all countries and reaffirms that the satisfaction of basic human needs is an essential element of poverty eradication, those needs being closely interrelated and comprising nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education, employment, housing and participation in cultural and social life;

2. Also expresses its solidarity with those suffering from a lack of control over resources, including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections, and calls for particular actions to provide appropriate social services to enable vulnerable people and people living in poverty to improve their lives, to exercise their rights and to participate fully in all social, economic and political activities and to contribute to social and economic development;

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[1] A/51/443.

[2] A/51/348.

[3] See A/CONF.166/9.

[4] A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, para. 2; see Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No.3

3. Decides that the theme for the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty shall be "Eradicating poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind", and also decides to adopt the logo for the Decade as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General;[5]

4. Recommends that, within the context of overall action for the eradication of poverty, special attention should be given to the multidimensional nature of poverty and to the national and international framework conditions and policies that are conducive to its eradication, which should aim at the social and economic integration of people living in poverty and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development;

5. Also recommends that the causes of poverty be addressed in the context of sectoral strategies such as those on environment, food security, population, migration, health, shelter, human resources development, fresh water, including clean water and sanitation, rural development and productive employment, and by addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups, all of which should aim at the social and economic integration of people living in poverty;

6. Decides that the themes for 1997 and 1998 shall be "Poverty, environment and development" and "Poverty, human rights and development", respectively; the themes for the remaining years of the Decade will be decided every two years, commencing in 1998, at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly;

7. Also decides that the objective of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty is to achieve the goal of eradicating absolute poverty and reducing overall poverty substantially in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation in implementing fully and effectively all agreements, commitments and recommendations of major United Nations conferences and summits organized since 1990 as they relate to poverty eradication;

8. Invites all donors to give high priority to the eradication of poverty in their assistance budgets and programmes, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, and also invites the relevant funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to support developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, in their efforts to achieve the overall goal of eradicating poverty and ensuring basic social services, by supporting national efforts to formulate, coordinate, implement, monitor and assess integrated poverty strategies, including capacity-building, and by supporting efforts to empower people living in poverty;

9. Stresses that international cooperation and assistance are essential to supporting the efforts of developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, to meet the goal of eradicating poverty, and stresses at the same time that, at the request of Governments, the United Nations system should provide technical assistance in further developing and sustaining national capacities to gather and analyse information and to develop indicators for poverty analysis;

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[5] A/51/443, paras. 53 (a) and (b).

10. Calls upon all Governments and the United Nations system, in particular the relevant funds, programmes and agencies, to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective and to use gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into the planning and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes on poverty eradication;

11. Stresses that during the Decade and beyond, people living in poverty and their organizations should be empowered by being fully involved in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of national strategies, activities and programmes for poverty eradication and the development of community bases, ensuring that such programmes reflect their priorities;

12. Encourages developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, to mobilize domestic and external resources for poverty eradication activities and programmes and to facilitate their full and effective implementation;

13. Recommends that all Governments formulate or strengthen integrated poverty eradication strategies and policies and implement national poverty eradication plans or programmes, in a participatory manner, to address the structural causes of poverty, encompassing action on the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels, and stresses that those plans or programmes should establish, within each national context, strategies and affordable time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty;

14. Recognizes the need to increase the share of funding for social development programmes, in particular basic social programmes, commensurate with the scope and scale of the activities required to achieve the objectives and goals set out in commitment 2 of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[6] and chapter II of the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development,[7] relating to the eradication of poverty;

15. Reaffirms, in this context, that developed countries should, as soon as possible, strive for the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and, where agreed, within that target, earmark 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for the least developed countries;

16. Also reaffirms the agreement on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes, and notes with interest the consensus reached at Oslo on 25 April 1996 on this matter;

17. Welcomes the recent initiatives of the Bretton Woods institutions, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, and the ongoing process at the international level regarding debt relief, as appropriate, for developing countries, and calls upon the international community, including

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[6] A/CONF.166/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[7] Ibid., annex II.

international financial institutions, to implement fully and effectively all initiatives that will contribute to a durable solution of the debt problems of developing countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries, and thus support their efforts to eradicate poverty;

18. Reaffirms that the international community, including multilateral financial institutions, should consider further measures to facilitate the access of developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, to international markets, in order to enable them to implement fully and effectively their national anti-poverty activities and programmes;

19. Urges the international community to reduce, as appropriate, excessive military expenditures on and investments in arms production and acquisition, consistent with national security requirements, in order to increase resources for social and economic development, in particular to poverty eradication programmes in developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries;

20. Calls upon all States, particularly donor countries, to contribute substantially to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, established under the authority of the Secretary-General, which includes in its activities support for activities related to the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty;

21. Invites the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme to continue, as a contribution, inter alia, to the Decade, the effort launched in 1996 with the Poverty Strategies Initiative, in order to strengthen assistance in the elaboration of national plans, programmes and strategies to eradicate poverty in developing countries, particularly African countries and the least developed countries, and calls upon all countries to contribute to the Initiative;

22. Welcomes the agreed conclusions on the coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1996,[4] and calls for their full and effective implementation by organizations of the United Nations system;

23. Notes with interest the initiative to convene a micro-credit summit in Washington, D.C., from 2 to 4 February 1997, to focus on the importance of increasing access to micro-credit and related financial services for self-employment and income-generating activities for people living in poverty, in particular women in developing countries, and calls upon all Governments, the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and the relevant actors of civil society to participate actively in the summit so as to contribute to its successful outcome and to support the development, implementation and management of micro-credit programmes in developing countries;

24. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Secretariat entity entrusted with the task of system-wide promotion of and follow-up to activities and programmes of the Decade with adequate human and financial resources within the regular budget of the United Nations to enable it to discharge fully and effectively its functions and responsibilities;

25. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the reports to be prepared for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 give due attention to the issue of poverty eradication;

26. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the overall assessment of the implementation of the programme for the observance of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, taking into account progress being made in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, including recommendations for possible actions and initiatives in relation to the Decade;

27. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session an item entitled "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)".

86th plenary meeting
16 December 1996